

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY).

□ 1345

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, this gentleman has reviewed the amendment and finds it acceptable and urges Members to vote for it.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TRAFICANT. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman very much and I want to congratulate him on his amendment. I think he is adding substantially to the nature of this bill, in the change which is taking place internationally, its impact upon the United States, and how fully we should understand it. I thank the gentleman very much.

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I appreciate the gentleman's comments, and I am hoping that impact is going to be favorable.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TRAFICANT. I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to thank my friend for offering the amendment, congratulate him on it, and suggest that not only do we not have any opposition to the amendment, but we gratefully and warmly embrace it, and I would urge all Members to support it.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment, as modified, offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

The amendment, as modified, was agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN) assumed the chair.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

#### COMMUNICATIONS AND PRIVATIZATION ACT OF 1998

The Committee resumed its sitting.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. GILMAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 4 offered by Mr. GILMAN:

Page 33, line 5, strike "the Congress"; and insert "the Committees on Commerce and International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Foreign Relations of the Senate".

Page 33, beginning on line 20, strike "Committee on" and all that follows through "of the Senate" on line 22 and insert the following: "Committees on Commerce and International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Foreign Relations of the Senate".

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I commend the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY) for taking up this complicated issue of international satellite policy. Furthermore, I support the basic purpose of this measure, which is to move ahead with privatizing the intergovernmental satellite organizations. It is an important undertaking to meet the current telecommunications marketplace.

However, in consultation with the distinguished ranking minority member of the House Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), I am offering an amendment to make a simple change to the bill before us. It merely adds the House and Senate Committees on International Relations to the committees required to be consulted prior to the meetings of the INTELSAT or Inmarsat Assembly of Parties, and revises the annual reporting requirement to also include these committees.

We are interested in this legislation because changing international communication satellite policy has foreign policy implications. I want to be clear we are not seeking to interfere with the Committee on Commerce's jurisdiction to determine telecommunications policy, but the State Department is the lead agency in the negotiations with the intergovernmental satellite organizations.

State traditionally has had the lead in multiagency teams negotiating with any international organizations. Inclusion of the Committee on International Relations in the reporting and consultative process allows the committees to perform their fundamental oversight responsibilities.

I hope the chairman will be willing to accept this amendment. This bill raises other concerns, which were flagged in testimony by the administration last fall. These issues, such as including specific directives on the conduct of the negotiations, deserve further consideration.

I have a concern about the expanded responsibilities given to the Federal Communications Commission in this bill for the multilateral negotiations aimed at privatizing INTELSAT. The President should have the discretion of ensuring that our State Department, and any other relevant government agency, plays a role in this process.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on Commerce as the bill proceeds through the process.

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GILMAN. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, I have reviewed the amendment and think it is a fair proposition. The State Department plays an important role in international negotiations, including regarding the intergovernmental satellite organizations.

My understanding is that this amendment is not intended to and in no way does affect the jurisdictional interests of our committees in the bill. Does the gentleman agree?

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, this amendment has no impact nor is it intended to have an impact on our committees' jurisdictional interest.

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will continue to yield, with that understanding, I think we are prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr. GILMAN. I thank the chairman for his considerable consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. TAUZIN

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment. It is amendment No. 7.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 7 offered by Mr. TAUZIN:

Page 28, beginning on line 14, strike section 642 through page 29, line 24, and redesignate the succeeding sections accordingly.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Chairman, let me first apologize for the complexities in this bill. There is no way for us to deal with satellite policy and the extraordinary nature by which this highly technical industry has developed without some very technical provisions.

Let me secondly again compliment the chairman and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) for the bill. It is a good attempt at accomplishing something which must be accomplished very soon, and that is the privatization of the government organizations, INTELSAT and Inmarsat, which service telecommunications needs across the world.

Let me thirdly point out that the amendment I offer is in no way, shape, or form designed to gut this bill. It does not. It is a very targeted amendment which deals with a single provision in the bill, which many of us believe ought not be in the bill if we want a bill passed to accomplish its good purposes.

Now, what is the provision that this amendment deletes? It is a very simple provision. It is a provision that says that the contracts that COMSAT has negotiated with companies like AT&T and MCI, those contracts to provide services over their network, could be abrogated by those customers unilaterally, at their own will, within a couple years. In effect, the provision in this bill is a grant of right by Congress to companies that have executed willfully, freely, contracts with COMSAT to then decide they will no longer keep